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ABSTRACT

This document discusses the scores of Albuquerque (New Mexico) Public Schools (APS) students on the American College Test (ACT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) during the 1982-83 school year. Graphs, a map, and a question and answer format are used to report the information. Comparisons of average ACT scores and average SAT scores are drawn for three categories: (1) students across the nation; (2) in the state of New Mexico; and (3) students enrolled in APS. Two charts indicate the mean SAT and ACT scores in rank order for large school districts across the nation, showing Albuquerque's relative placement. APS students achieved scores consistently higher than the national and state averages. The factors which most significantly contributed to the success of APS students on the college entrance examinations are discussed. (DWH)

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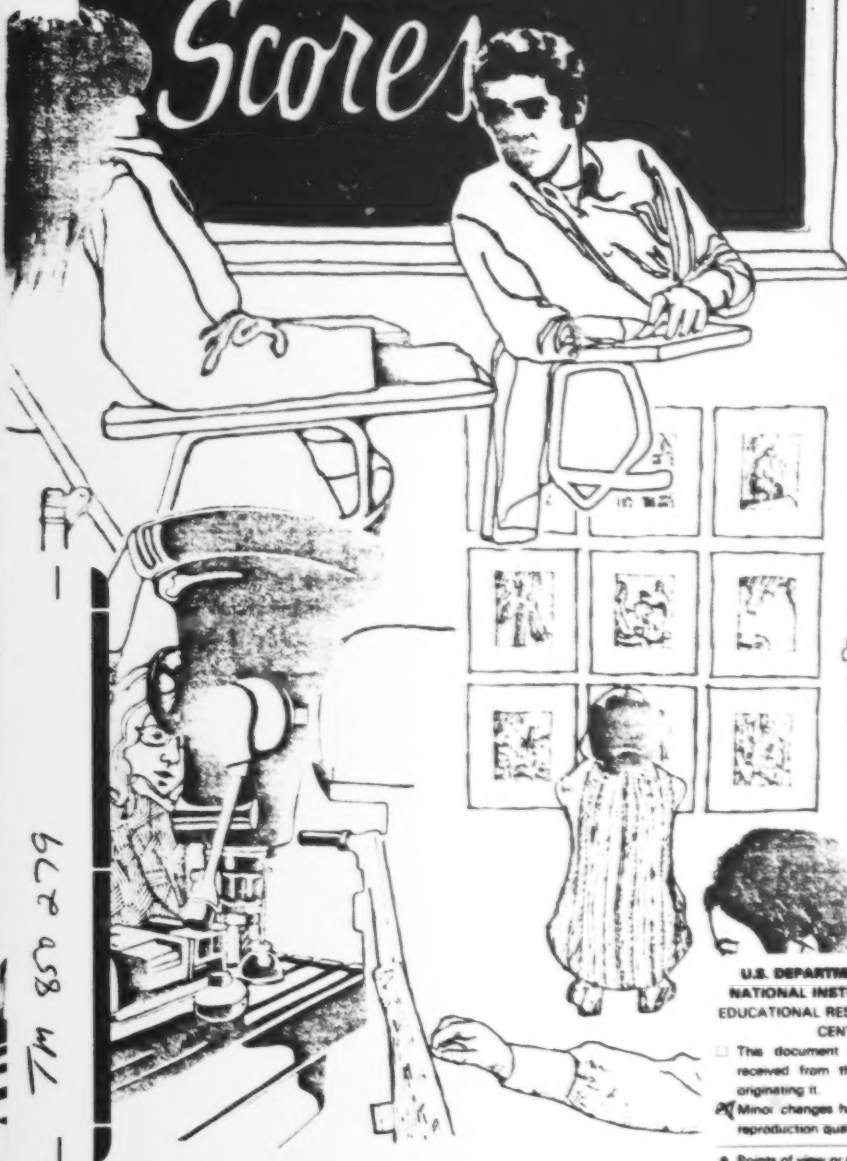
WINTER 1984



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ACT and SAT
Scores

APS Ranks High on College Entrance Exams



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APS Test Scores on ACT Above National Averages

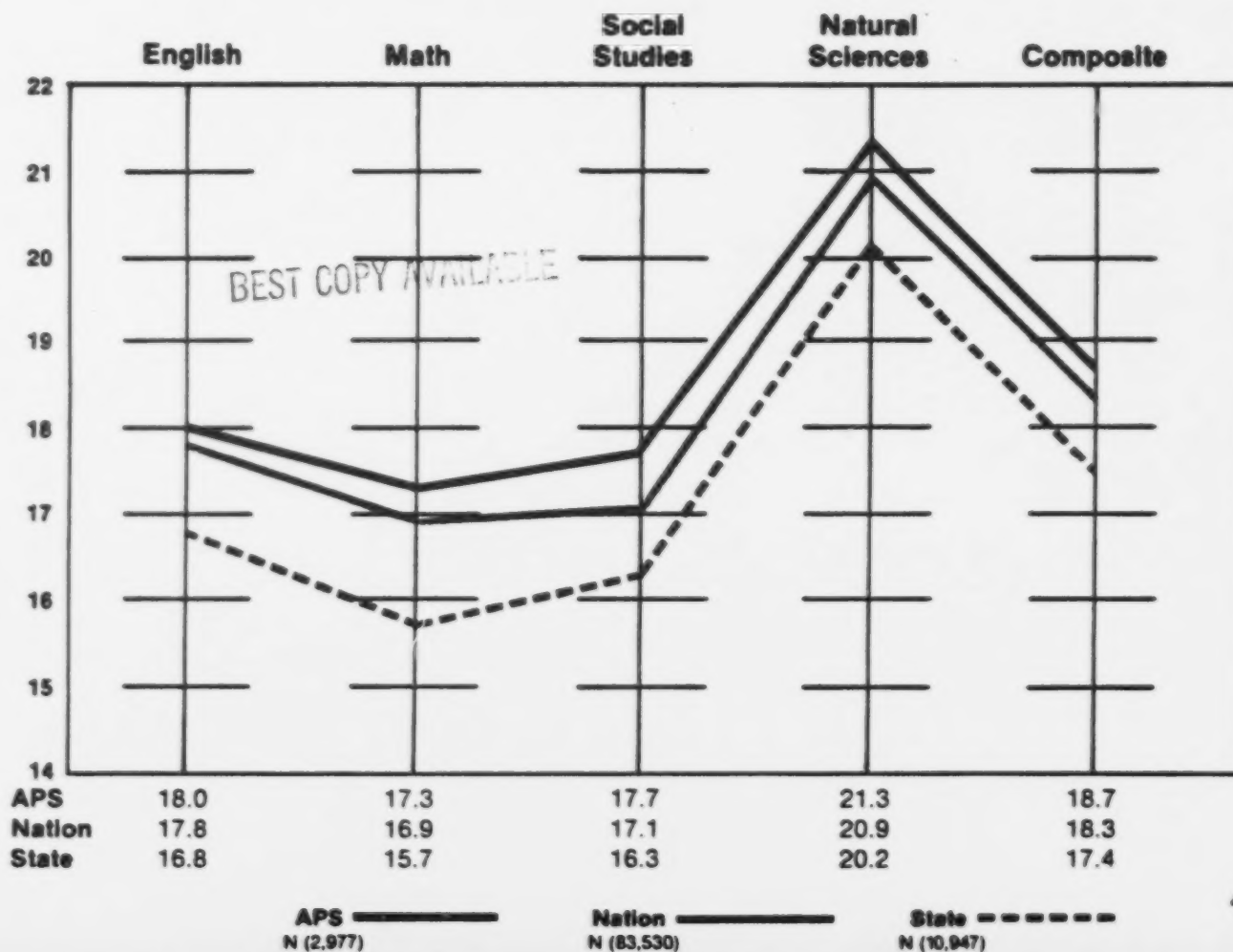
INTRODUCTION

During the 1982-83 school year almost one-and-a-half million high school students in the United States took either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), a test of the College Entrance Examination Board. Students who plan to attend a college or university may voluntarily participate in one or both testing programs. In APS, 2977 students took the ACT and 498 students took the SAT. Total average scores for APS students on both college entrance examinations are higher than the national average on these tests.

Most colleges and universities in this country require students to submit scores of the ACT or SAT as one factor for deciding on student admissions, placement and counseling. Other factors which are generally used in conjunction with test scores for college admissions include high school grades, number of high school credits earned, rank in class, examination of the student's transcript for specific courses required for college entrance, the student's activities in high school, and others specified by the institution such as written recommendations from the student's teachers or counselor. Several private corporations use college entrance examination scores as one of the deciding factors for awarding scholarships to individuals.



Comparison of the Average ACT Scores 1982-83 APS — Nation — State



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Both tests are offered by the testing companies at least five times each school year.

Although scores on college entrance exams can be important indicators of a student's potential for success in college, both testing companies warn against misuse of test scores regarding individual students or the school they attend. Misuses include using any test score as the sole basis for making important educational decisions which affect the lives of individuals, without considering other equally important information available on the student. Since these tests were designed for very specific purposes, the scores should not be used as a measure of overall performance of students, teachers or schools.

APS students continue to show academic proficiency on both college entrance examinations. APS students' average scores surpass average scores for their counterparts in New Mexico, the southwest and the nation. Since 1976 scores for APS students have been above national averages on both the ACT and the SAT.



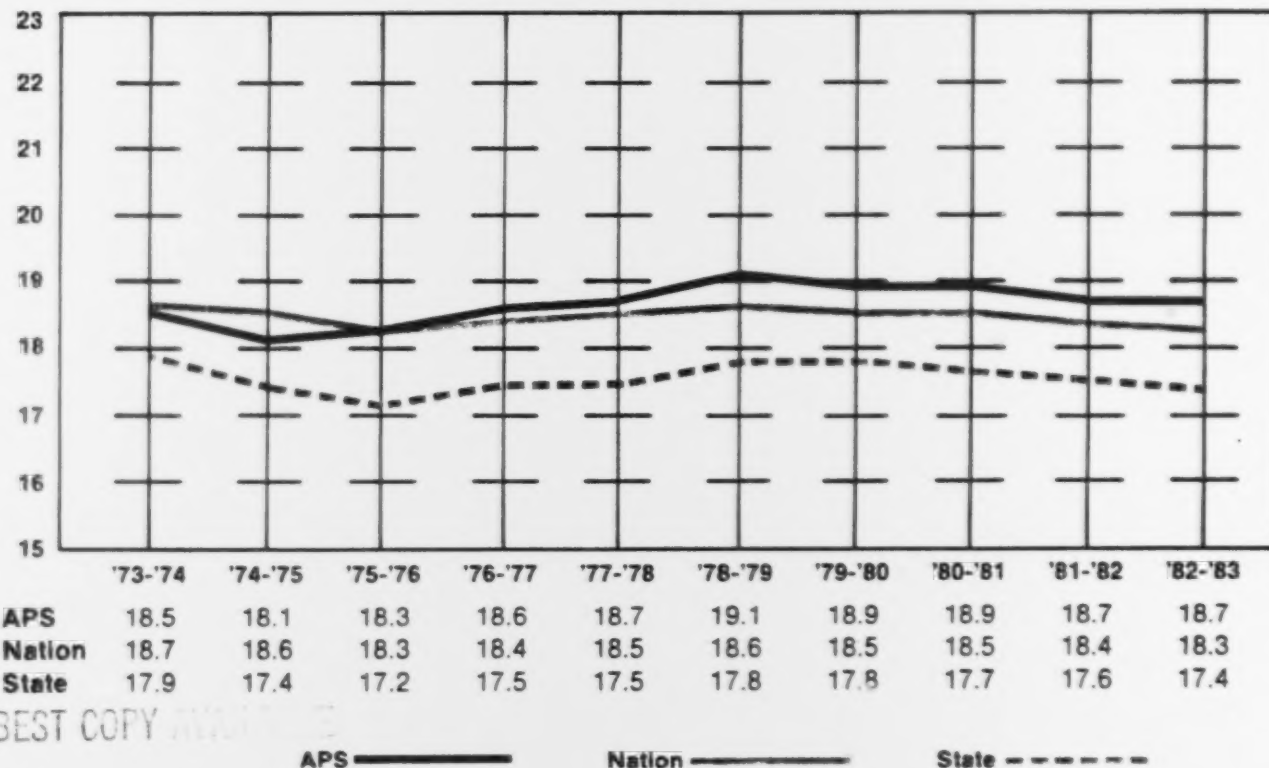
APS students have been scoring above the national averages for the past several years. Is that true again this year?

Yes. APS college-bound students scored above the national and New Mexico state averages on every subtest of the ACT. There are four subtests on the ACT including English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Natural Sciences. The graph at the top right on this page shows the average scores.

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Comparison of ACT Composite Averages 1973-1983 APS — Nation — State



How did students at each of the APS high schools score on the ACT?

The average ACT Composite scores for each APS high school are:

School	Average Score
Albuquerque High School	15.7
Cibola High School	18.9
Del Norte High School	19.2
Eldorado High School	19.7
Highland High School	19.1
Manzano High School	18.9
Rio Grande High School	15.2

Sandia High School	19.5
Valley High School	17.6
West Mesa High School	16.0

What percentage of APS graduates took the ACT in 1982-83?

Last year, 2977 students took the ACT. Of that number 2126 reported that they were classified as graduating seniors. This is about 39 percent of the number of students enrolled as seniors in APS high schools.

Have APS students continued to perform well on the SAT?

Yes (see graph next page). Again this year APS students are above national averages on the SAT. Average scores for APS are 62 points higher than the national average in verbal skills and 60 points higher than the national average in math skills. APS college-bound students as a group do very well on this test.

(Continued on next page)

APS Scores Are High on SAT

(Continued from page one)

What are the SAT scores for APS high schools?

The average scores for each high school in verbal and math, respectively, are:

School	Average Verbal	Average Math
Albuquerque High	474	511
Cibola High	482	533
Del Norte High	497	536
Eldorado High	487	522
Highland High	478	510
Manzano High	498	547
Rio Grande High	522	502
Sandia High	486	552
Valley High	511	544
West Mesa High		

*The testing company does not provide score reports when fewer than five students take the test.

What percentage of APS graduates took the SAT in 1982-83?

Last year, 498 students in APS took the SAT. This number represents slightly more than 9% of the number of seniors who were enrolled at the end of the school year.

Why do more APS students take the ACT than the SAT?

For several years colleges and universities in New Mexico have accepted ACT results for admission and/or placement. Last year approximately 64 percent of the APS college-bound students decided to stay in New Mexico for their higher education experience. Since the ACT was the appropriate exam for them, it was the most-selected test for APS students. Students who take the SAT are typically those who plan to go out-

of-state to college or who want to keep their options open. We have no way of knowing how many APS students may have taken both tests.

Are students required to take these exams?

There is no APS requirement for students to take either the ACT or the SAT. Most colleges or universities require either the ACT or the SAT scores so that students can be placed in the most appropriate courses. Of course institutions of higher learning do not depend on test scores alone. Generally speaking, decisions regarding placement take a number of other factors into account, such as rank in graduating class, overall grade point average, and other indicators relating to high school achievement.

Can high school juniors take these tests?

Yes. In the 1982-83 ACT testing, 25 percent of the APS students were juniors. High school counselors encourage students and their parents to plan early for college attendance and financing. Those students who have made a decision in the junior year are encouraged to take entrance exams early. Students may retake these tests as often as desired, so some juniors take the exams for practice. Colleges and universities will accept the highest obtained test score for entrance, so some students repeat the tests to try to improve their scores. The College Entrance Examination Board that administers the SAT program offers a test to juniors called the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) which serves as excellent practice for either

college entrance exam as well as being the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Students who score high on the PSAT may receive scholarships to the college

of their choice and may be eligible for recognition as National Merit Scholars.

Do the students know in advance the types of test questions they will be asked?

Yes. When students register for the test of their choice at their high school counseling office, they receive a packet of explanatory materials. Each testing company provides a brochure describing the test, its purposes and sample test items. If the student studies these sample test items carefully, he or she will have a good idea of the test's expectations.

Also, there are commercially-prepared study guides available in

most bookstores. These guides are usually very thorough and may be very helpful to the student who wishes to review in more depth.

Can you give some advice to parents who would like to begin planning early?

Early planning and preparation can yield very positive results. Even prior to high school, parents and students should begin by studying the high school course offering booklet to select the proper courses that will help prepare the student for college-level work. Every APS high school offers a complete college preparatory program of studies, however, it is up to the

individual student and his/her parents to select the courses which best suit plans for the future.

Do schools assist in this planning?

Yes. Each fall high school counselors meet with 9th grade students and their parents to prepare a four-year plan which outlines the chosen course of study for all four years of high school. Of course this process works better when parents and students take an active, interested role in planning, and work with the counselor to see that the proper courses are taken.

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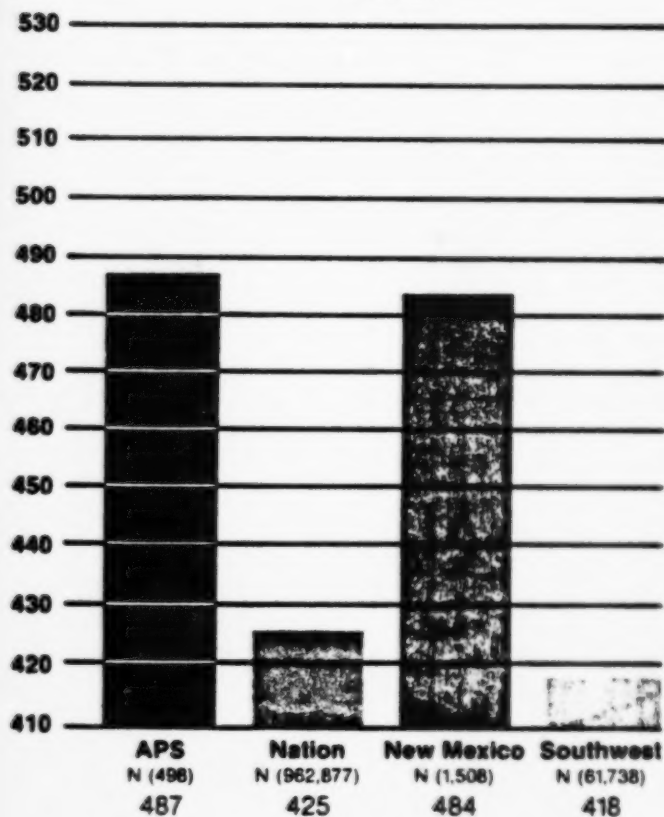
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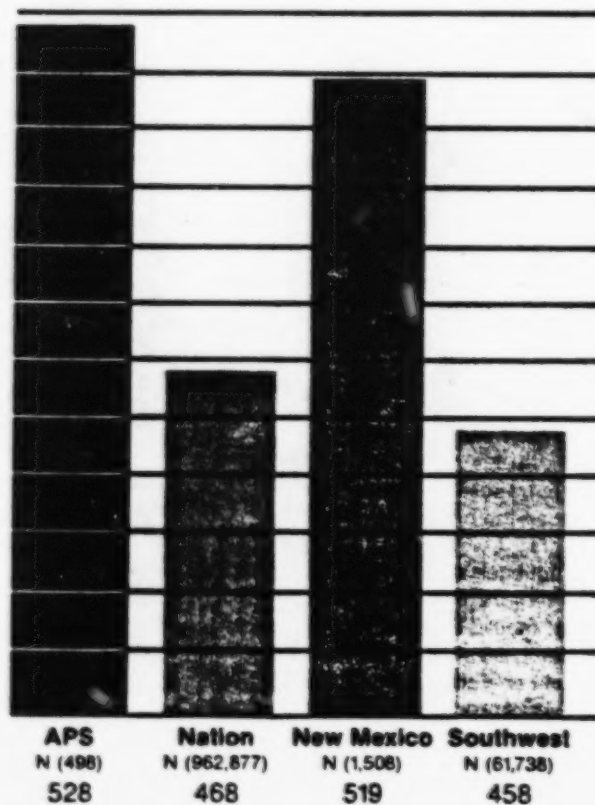
College Entrance Examination Board

SAT Test Scores — 1982-83

Verbal



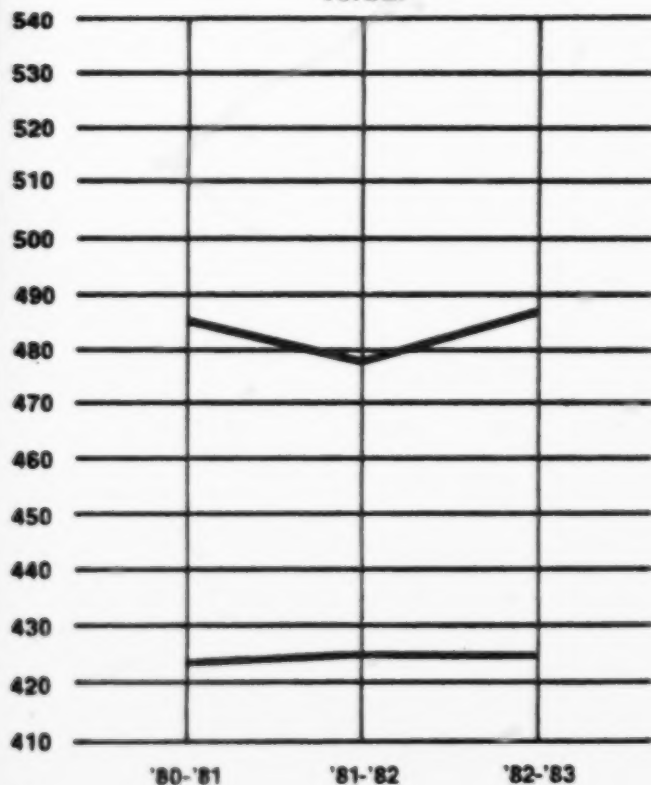
Math



N = Number of students tested

Three-Year Trend for SAT Scores 1981-1983

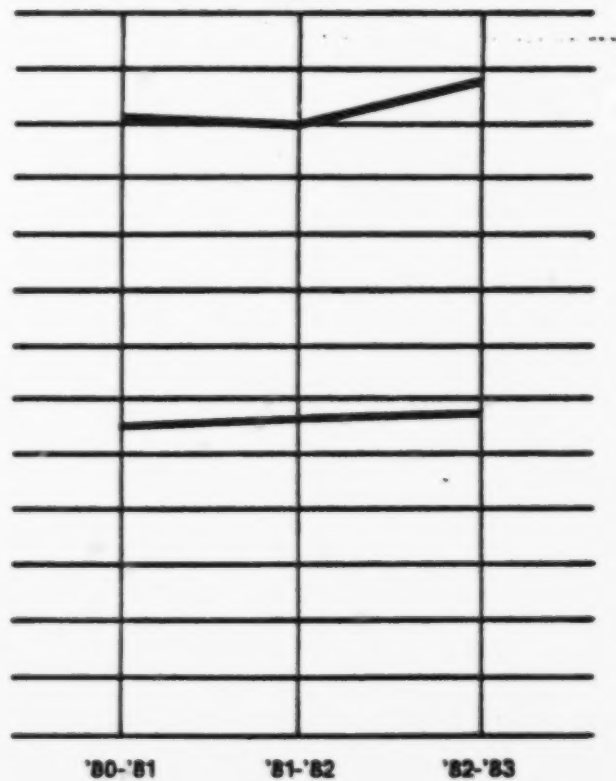
Verbal



APS
Nation

APS ———

Math



Nation ———

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Consulting college catalogs in the high school counseling office can be very helpful. Specific colleges may have different entrance requirements which must be satisfied during the high school program.

Do students really do better on the entrance exams if they take the college-bound courses recommended by their high schools?

They do much better. Students who take the ACT are asked to self-report the type of curriculum they experienced in high school: college preparatory, general, vocational or business. In 1982-83, 71 percent of the APS students who took the ACT reported a college preparatory background. These students scored much higher on every area of the test than any other curriculum group.

Also, four years ago several APS high schools did a follow-up check of hundreds of their graduates to compare the students' ACT scores to the high school courses taken. There was no doubt that those students who had followed the recommended college-bound course of study did much better on the ACT and SAT.

How did APS minority students score this year?

The two testing companies do not include average scores for separate ethnic groups in the score reports we receive. Students are asked to identify themselves according to ethnicity. ACT data for APS students shows that approximately 24 percent of the students reported themselves as members of a minority group.



COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)

Testing Dates

April 7, 1984

May 5, 1984

June 2, 1984

ACT (American College Test)

Testing Dates

March 31, 1984

June 9, 1984

For further information, contact your high school counselor.

Where APS Students Attend College

The map of the United States shows where 1982-83 APS students planned to attend college. The majority (64%) indicated a New Mexico college or university as their choice. Other states where substantial numbers of 1983 graduates planned to attend school were Colorado (8%), California (7%), Texas (5%), and Arizona (4%).

Comparison of APS ACT and SAT Scores with Large School Districts Across the Nation

Compared to other large public school districts around the country, APS students rank high on both the ACT and the SAT.

In a nationwide study recently compiled by Sandra W. O'Neal, District Coordinator of Testing with the Albuquerque Public Schools, APS ranked no lower than fourth in any ACT content area when compared to 13 major districts that use this test. The highest ranking content area was science, where APS placed second in the national study. APS ranked fourth in all other content areas which were English, Math, and Social Studies. As the chart below indicates, all APS average scores were above the national average.

On the SAT (College Boards), out of the major districts responding whose students use this as the primary test, APS ranked first in Verbal and second in Math. The SAT scores for APS students were also well above the national average. The school districts that participated in this study represented 34 large districts across the country.

Acknowledgement: This issue of *APS in Action* was produced in collaboration with the APS Instructional Research, Testing and Evaluation department. The interview on the inside pages of this publication was with Sandra O'Neal (IRTE).

ACT Scores, 1982-83

Mean Scores in Rank Order

	English	Math	Social Studies	Science
1.	19.8	20.5	20.7	23.0
2.	18.7	17.8	18.3	21.3
3.	18.1	17.5	18.2	21.3
4.	18.0	17.3	17.7	21.2
NATL.	17.8	17.0	17.7	21.1
5.	17.8	NATL. 16.9	NATL. 17.1	21.0
6.	17.7	16.6	17.1	NATL. 20.9
	17.7	16.4	16.6	20.7
8.	17.5	15.6	16.5	20.4
9.	17.1	15.3	16.2	20.3
10.	16.4	15.1	16.1	20.2
11.	15.1	13.2	13.9	19.6
	15.1	13.0	13.4	19.5
13.	14.4	12.1	12.3	17.4

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School districts reporting ACT scores: *

Albuquerque, Cincinnati, Columbus, Little Rock, Louisville, Memphis, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Pensacola, Phoenix, Shawnee Mission (Kan.), Tucson, Tulsa.

*Major users of ACT with more than 30,000 students.

SAT Scores, 1982-83

Mean Scores in Rank Order

	Verbal	Math
1.	487	539
2.	476	529
3.	469	509
4.	466	506
5.	460	505
6.	456	497
7.	446	495
8.	444	491
9.	432	489
10.	430	485
11.	428	481
12.	426	471
NATL.	425	470
13.	425	NATL. 468
14.	420	465
15.	418	464
16.	417	464
17.	412	458
18.	408	456
	408	433
19.	397	422
20.	393	418
21.	380	417
22.	370	403

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School Districts reporting SAT scores:

Albuquerque, Anaheim, Anne Arundel Co. (MD), Austin, Baltimore Co. (MD), Clearwater, Colorado Springs, Dallas, El Paso, Eugene, Fairfax, Fort Myers, Fort Wayne, Fort Worth, Garland (TX), Las Vegas, Long Beach, Orlando, Rockville, San Diego, Seattle, Springfield.

APS in ACTION

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March Calendar

March 14 — End of third grading period

March 19-23 — Parent/Teacher Conference Week

March 26-30 — Spring Recess

POSTSCRIPT



By **Carol Robinson**
APS Director of
Research and Evaluation

APS Scores Are Among The Highest In The Nation

Major industries and businesses that are considering locating in the Albuquerque area frequently contact my office with questions regarding the quality of our educational system. A major index typically considered by these agencies is the quality of preparation of APS college-bound students.

APS has for several years been especially proud of scores received by those students who voluntarily participate in the ACT and SAT testing. Recent inquiries from the State Legislature and executive searches from other states have given a major focus of the need to examine APS students' scores as compared to other large districts throughout the nation. For these and other reasons, the APS District Coordinator of Testing, Sandra O'Neal, recently completed a major nation-wide study which is highlighted in this *APS in Action*. Her study demonstrates that APS students' scores on both the ACT and the SAT are among the highest in the nation.

As recently as last week, local reporters asked me why APS students do so well on these tests. Although there is never a simple answer to a complex question such as this, the Department of Instructional Research,

Testing, and Evaluation has identified several major contributing factors:

- The Four-Year Plan, adopted several years ago, encourages students and parents to meet with counselors to outline the high school specific courses of study prior to the student's freshman year. This early planning enables students to choose appropriate courses to meet individual future needs.
- Rising costs of attending colleges and universities have underscored the need for early planning and solid preparation. Parents have always been interested in the future of their children; however, this interest has intensified in recent years because of higher costs and a resurgent focus on college due to the recent technological emphasis in our society.
- School personnel report that today's high school students are more serious about their studies and their futures than were students progressing through our high schools a decade ago.
- In-depth analysis has demonstrated that students who choose college preparatory courses in high school score higher on both the ACT and SAT.

It is certainly a pleasure to share these scores with you because they are yet another indicator of the success of our students and our schools. APS is very proud of its instructional program and all the achievements of APS students.

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